

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Starting on page 3, replace the paragraph beginning at line 26 and extending to page 4, line 2, with the following paragraph:

In a further preferred embodiment the nucleic acid according to the present invention comprises at least the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 7A (SEQ ID NO. 1) or the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 8A (SEQ ID NO. 2) or nucleotides 40 to 333 of the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 8A (SEQ ID NO. 2) or mutants of such nucleic acids leading to the expression of functionally active polypeptides. Examples of such mutations include deletions, insertions and substitutions of one or more nucleotides such as mutations which lead to conservative amino acid substitutions, e.g., such mutations in the range of nucleotides 40 to 333 of the nucleotide sequence shown in Fig. 8A (SEQ ID NO. 2), i.e., the region of the nucleotide sequence encoding the 7 Cys-knot region, which is highly conserved in TGF- $\beta$ -like proteins.

Starting on page 4, replace the paragraph beginning at line 26 with the following paragraph:

A further embodiment of the present invention relates to the protein itself, which is encoded by the nucleic acid as defined above. Examples of the primary amino acid sequence of the protein according to the present invention are given in Figs. 7B (SEQ ID NO. 3) and 8B (SEQ ID NO. 4), respectively. Further examples of the primary amino acid sequence of the protein according to the present invention comprise amino acid residues 14 to 111 of the sequence shown in Fig. 8B (SEQ ID NO. 4) as well as homologs thereof having conservative amino acid substitutions.

On page 7, replace "The figures show:" at line 7 with the following:

**Brief Description of the Drawings**

Other features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following description of the preferred embodiments thereof and from the claims, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which show:

On page 7, replace "Fig. 1" at line 9 with --Figs. 1A-1D--.

On page 8, replace "Fig. 4" at line 3 with --Figs. 4A-4B--.

On page 8, replace "Fig. 5" at line 16 with --Figs. 5A-5B--.

On page 8, replace "Fig. 6" at line 26 with --Figs. 6A-6B--.

On page 9, replace "Fig. 7" at line 1 with --Figs. 7A-7B--.

On page 9, replace "Fig. 8" at line 5 with --Figs. 8A-8B--.

On page 9, replace the paragraph beginning at line 20 with the following paragraph:

According to a possible alternative translation start codon which is located 39 nucleotides upstream from the first nucleotide of the sequence shown in Fig. 7A (SEQ ID NO. 1), the corresponding protein may also comprise 13 additional amino acids (MPGQELRTLNGSQ) (SEQ ID NO. 5) N-terminal to the sequence shown in Fig. 7B (SEQ ID NO. 3).